

Safety Bulletin

Myth vs. Fact About Safety Belts

You know federal law requires you to wear a safety belt. But did you know your passenger needs one too?

In June, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) issued a revised final rule that requires all CMV passengers to use seat belts whenever the vehicle is operated on public roads in interstate commerce.

The rule went into effect on August 8. It stems from the most recent FMCSA CMV Seat Belt Usage Survey, published in March 2014. That survey shows CMV passengers buckle up at a lower rate (73 percent) than CMV drivers (84 percent).



If you're not yet wearing a safety belt regularly, you may believe some common myths. Here, the FMCSA looks at these myths and gives you the facts:

MYTH: Safety belts are uncomfortable and restrict movement.

FACT: You can get more comfortable by adjusting the seat, lap and shoulder belt once you buckle up.

MYTH: Not wearing a safety belt is my choice. It doesn't hurt anyone but me.

FACT: Not wearing a safety belt can affect your family, your loved ones and other motorists, because wearing a safety belt can help you avoid losing control of your truck in a crash. Federal law requires all CMV drivers to buckle up.

MYTH: If I wear a safety belt, I can't get out of a burning or submerged truck.

FACT: Safety belts keep you from being knocked unconscious. This increases your chance for escape. Also, fire or submersion occurs in less than 5 percent of fatal truck crashes.

MYTH: It's better to be thrown clear of the wreckage if I crash.

FACT: A vehicle occupant is four times as likely to be killed when thrown from the vehicle.

MYTH: It takes too much time to fasten your safety belt 20 times a day.

FACT: Buckling up takes three seconds. Multiply that by 20 times, and it takes only 1 minute total.

MYTH: I'm a good driver. I don't need a safety belt.

FACT: No matter how good a driver you are, crashes also can be caused by other drivers, bad weather, mechanical failure or a tire blowout.

MYTH: Safety belts aren't needed at low speeds.

FACT: A frontal collision with your truck at 30 mph will cause an unbelted person to move forward at 30 mph. That's the same velocity as a person falling from a three-story building.